SPECIAL 16page Pullout

AGENT ORANGE CONFERENCE HITS VA, DEMANDS TREATMENT

THE VETERAN

Vietnam Veterans Against the War

25¢

VOL.10 No.1 VETS OF ALL ERAS, CLOSE RANKS! Feb./Mar.1980

For a Decent Life without War

THE CHALLENGE OF 1980

As we enter the decade of the 1980's, VVAW is well aware of both the problems and the challenges that await us.

The world has changed since VVAW began back in 1967, and we are proud to have played a part in some of those changes. The '70's saw VVAW in Operation Dewey Canyon III where we threw away the medals we had been awarded on the battlefields of Vietnam; the '70's also saw the Winter Soldier Investigation into U.S. War Crimes in Indochina. And there were thousands of VVAW protests in cities and towns across the country, all of which led to helping with the final U.S. pullout of troops from Indochina.

The '70's saw Kent State and Jackson State; and they saw the resignation of Nixon, another event in which VVAW helped to build the struggle.

Of course VVAW accomplished none of these vital goals alone. We joined with, helped build, and fought alongside large movements of thousands and hundreds of thousands, showing once again that the unity of masses of people can make significant change.

The lessons learned in the '70's provide us with some directions for the '80's. We see the world in change with the Soviet Union rapidly expanding its influence, and the U.S. imperialists fading. The potential for another war increases daily and, as we did in the '70's, VVAW will bring its experiences to a new situation.

The government which was so glad to use us in Indochina is still far from doing right by vets, and Agent Orange poisoning is only one--if the most crucial--area where we will have to fight for what vets need. We see in the 1980's an opportunity to unite many of the veterans who were used once by the government and the profit-seekers and, once their use was gone, were tossed aside.

This issue of THE VETERAN is full of both the problems and the challenges. We of VVAW expect--and intend--to live up to the challenges of the '80's and fulfill the expectations that our own history has set for us. We firmly intend to unite all who can be united in order to fight for what we all need. With all the problems which we see ahead, the future looks bright and we accept the challenges.

Vietnam Veterans Against the War
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VETERANS' NOTES

Who Can Get What(says the V.A.)

DICHARGES; HOME LOANS;COUNSELLING

VETS NOTES carries some of the new laws, V.A. regulations, Congressional activites and court decisions of particular importance to vets. One of the problems with all these things is that vets--except those who work in the middle of the V.A. or on other vets activities--are likely never to hear about them. So here are some of the most recent activities of the government concerning veterans.

UPGRADING OF DISCHARGES: According to a ruling by a U.S. District Court, all Vietnam-era veterans given bad discharges after being forced to undergo testing for drug abuse will have their discharges raised to "honorable." About 10,000 Army vets are involved.

The judge ordered the Army to begin a search for those affected--those who went through the compulsory urinalysis testing ordered by deposed President Nixon in 1971. The Army must also issue a press release concerning the new program and mail honorable discharge certificates to those vets it can find.

Ten thousand is a good chunk of bad discharges to be dealt with at one time, but most vets who got bad paper 6, 7, 8 years ago have already been screwed over--and have mostly learned to live with it. There's no way the change in policy can change their lives and the years they have survived with the bad discharges. But for some of these vets, the ruling opens up a shot at the GI Bill and various other benefits previously denied to them.

If you:

1. Got a general or undesirable discharge as a "drug abuser," and were found out because of the Army's urinalysis program, you qualify for this program.

2. Although the Army is supposed to send you the new certificate, it's safe to guess they aren't going to try too hard to find you, particularly if you've moved from your home of record at time of discharge.

3. The Vets Education Project of the American Civil Liberties Union (which represented vets in the case) have a toll-free number for information. That number is (800) 424-5402. Part of the judges order is that the military keep the lawyers informed about their progress in getting out the discharges, making the ACLU lawyers a kind of watchdog in the case. So if you get messed around trying to get the discharge changed, they are the people to call.

HOME LOANS: (This information comes from the Michigan Association of Concerned Veterans) Interest rates on home loans are so huge that the bottom has fallen out of the market--rates are up to 14 and 15%. V.A. loan guarantees are available at 11 1/2% and the seller is required by law to pay the difference between the V.A. loan rate and your mortgage company's rate. A V.A. loan guarantee will insure up to a $100,000 mortgage. Payments on the loan should be approximately $100 per $10,000 borrowed. And everyone should be clear that the V.A. isn't giving us anything--it's merely guaranteeing the loan.

Because of the state of the housing market, chances for getting a V.A. guaranteed loan are better than they have been for some time in the past. It's even reached the point where real estate brokers are looking for business from vets. As the MACV Newsletter puts it, if you have the money and are interested, "contact a couple of real estate agents and get them to fight for your business...we spent some time, I recall, fighting for theirs."

G I BILL: The V.A. says it will "go all the way to the President, if necessary,"to get a 10% GI Bill hike in the next budget. Of course there was a raise in October of 1977 and inflation is only rising at about 12% a year....

RECALL: Plans are underway to give pre-assignment orders to selected military retirees before October, 1980. That would allow them to move quickly to their assignments in the case of a national emergency.

Right now the program's aimed at real, live retirees--offiers and senior NCO's. First on the list will be Regular Army retirees who are less than five years out of the military.

And who comes a little further down the line?

* * *

VIETNAM VET COUNSELLING: A new program of counselling for Vietnam-era vets with re-adjustment problems was officially started on October 1, 1979.

Vietnam-era vets must request such assistance within two years after discharge or before the 1st of October, 1981.

Cont. from p.23

FRAGGIN'

tennis courts. A happy year at Clark. The supply sergeants probably made a little more in windfall profits and the officers got a little truer bounce to their balls!

* * * * *

I always wondered how some of our officers got to be the way they were. Now I realize that they were trained to be like that. It's been disclosed that part of the hazing procedure for underclassmen at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point was to have them kill chickens with *their teeth* and run around wearing Ku Klux Klan robes. Many of them took this part of their training seriously.

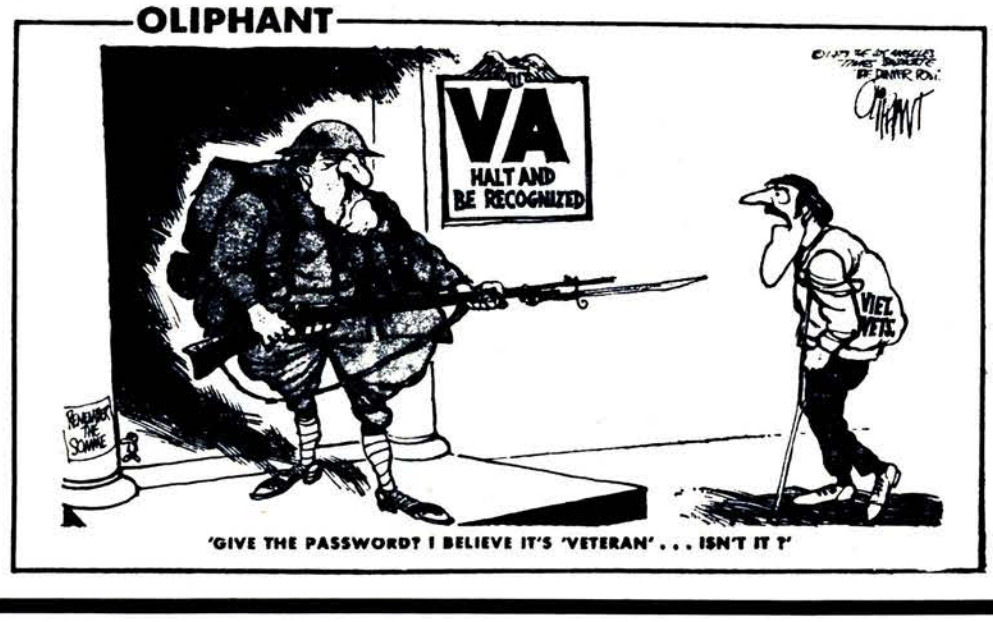
This isn't the grand old Army that John Wayne used to try to sell us. That Army was supposed to bite off the heads of the racists and burn crosses at the doorsteps of chickens. They got it mixed up at West Point--along with lots of other things.

GRENADE OF THE MONTH

This month's grenade goes to Frank Collin, former head of the Nazi Party headquartered in Chicago, and pretender to the title of national "fuerher." Funny Frankie was arrested and charged with taking indecent liberties with children.

Funny Frankie used to take one eleven and three fourteen-year old boys to Nazi Party Headquarters where he committed the sex acts and then took pictures of the naked boys holding a rifle. At the moment he's out on bond.

Funny Frankie must have wanted to get on the list of Famous Freaky Fascists of History along with Hitler's General Staff and Dick and Bebe. Now that he got caught with his pants down, his career has taken a nosedive. But there is still hope: we hear that West Point is interested--they think Funny Frankie might just fit into their program!



The World Situation and War

WE WON'T BE USED AGAIN

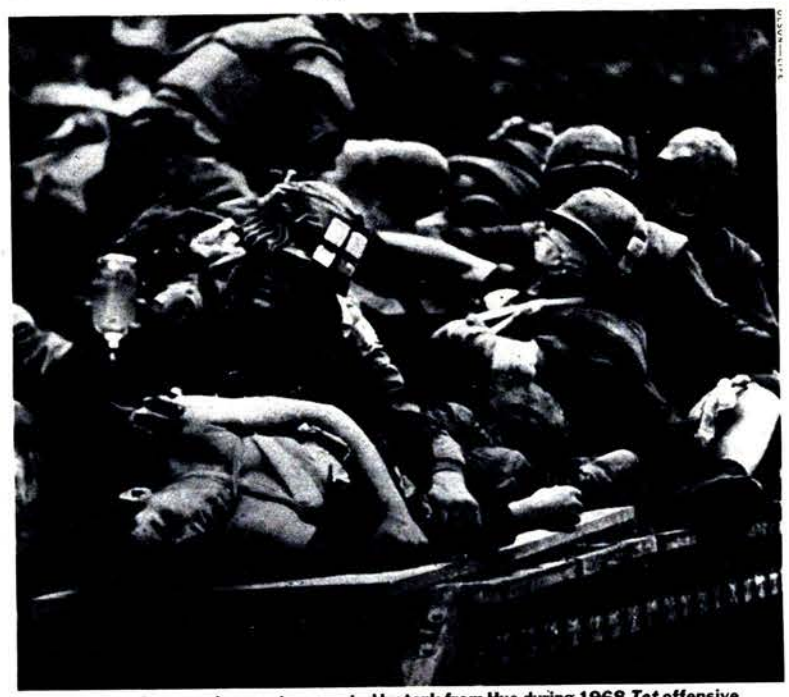
Afghanistan, Iran--names of far-off places that, as kids, we only heard of in some history class. We saw the Khyber Pass in some British movie, perhaps, and saw Persia in a Steve Reeves grade-B movie. Today, these countries flash into our living-rooms each and every evening and what happens there has a potentially devastating affect on our lives and the lives of our children.

And there are other faraway countries which effect international events--Nicaraugua or Rhodesia/Zimbabwe; Vietnam and Cambodia. Countries we thought too obscure to ever hear from are making the headlines because they are the focus of world events. As we enter the '80's, we know that things will not remain the same; the question is how are they moving? Will there be another depression and, perhaps more important to our future and that of our children, will there be another world war?

Fundemental changes are shaking the world. At the end of World War II the U.S. was the world's "Elephant which could sit on anyone," in the words of one politician. Sole control of nuclear weapons, and expertise in further development of these weapons kept the U.S. ahead for years--at least until the end of the victorious struggle for liberation in Indochina. Now we find this imperialist giant being chastened around the world both by people of other countries demanding their independence (as in Iran, for instance) and by the other superpower, the Soviet Union.

The U.S. is on the decline. Certainly, the multi-national corporations who profitted off the resources of other countries--mostly in the Third World--are having problems. The "ugly American" is being kicked out of country after country. And the Soviet Union is moving in. Coming in under the cover of being a great socialist "brother," and providing aid against the imperialism of the U.S., it has improved and solidified its position. The Soviet Union has become more aggressive, prowling around Africa the way that no discredited European country or the U.S.

With the invasion of Afghanistan, the Soviet Union has taken a leap from earlier manuevers. Even in the invasions of Hungary and Czechloslovakia, there were already Soviet troops in the countries. In Afghanistan, however, it is using its troops to take land and set up colonies. It is spending up to 50% of its gross national product on the military (and you can bet that's not salaries for an "all-volunteer military,"



Wounded American servicemen transported by tank from Hue during 1968 *Tet* offensive

A war that dragged on too bitterly and too long to be tucked into a corner of the mind

either) and that simply means making up for the loses by ripping off other countries. The "Ugly Russian," big-mouthed and domineering is rapidly replacing the "Ugly American."

U.S. corporations are, of course, in a tizzy as they see their sources of raw materials and markets and cheap labor being snatched from their claws. The cry, "Look! Look at the Russians! They are stealing from us. We must fight them--we have to stop them now! More for defense! Restart the draft! Gear up for war!"

And, while they're saying all that, they throw the burden on their workers, demanding increased productivity or getting loans from the government which the workers pay from our taxes. In short, they use the threat of an economic slowdown and the potential for a depression as a way to squeeze a few more profits out of the work force.

VVAW grew out of the 1960's. We were the kids who went off to fight in Indochina, either because we were drafted or enlisted. For the most part we fell for the recruiters' stories about excitement, job opportunities and adventure in far-off places. Well, we learned about the "far-off places" in Southeast Asia. Excitement? Yes, it made the heat a little hotter and the heart beat faster when we were getting shot at in the rice paddies, though the heart stopped if you were hit. Adventure? Yes, if adventure was guarding the Michelon plantations and the Texaco oil storage areas in Vietnam. As for jobs? Most of us would not even trade our unemployment checks for the "new action Army."

In fact, we saw America--or at least the rich band of money grubbers who run the country for what they were--and are. Simply, a bunch of parasites living off the sweat and blood of others, never doing the fighting but sure doing all the talking. They're the ones who live in luxury and tell us to "tighten your belts."

It sure wasn't hard to see that these people didn't give a damn about people in foreign lands. But it took things like Agent Orange poisoning, LSD tests on unsuspecting GI's and an unresponsive V.A. for us to see how much they cared about us. We were their cannon fodder in the service, and we were no better--in fact worse--after we got out.

And that says something for the future if and when the war they're pushing for finally comes about in whatever form it might take. Why fight for them? Will a Rockefeller pay for your gas in the winter when you're freezing? He sure hasn't yet! Will Dow Chemical reach into its corporate pockets to divert some of its millions--or even its laboratories-to testing vets with Agent Orange poisoning? Unthinkable. Will the owners of the oil companies give back some of their profits so we can find jobs? Not even that!

If they won't do that sort of thing for us, why the hell should we follow them down the road to destruction? Why give them our children for their armies? Our fight isn't in some foreign land against some poor slob who's being used by his commissar the same way we've been used by Shell Oil. It's right here and it is often as simple as the fight for heat, for adequate schools, for crime-free neighborhoods and bribe-free politicians and, finally, an old age with dignity after years of labor.

FIGHT THE RICH, NOT THEIR WARS!

FUNDS NEEDED

SUPPORT VVAW

It takes money to run an organization. Printing costs, mailings, telephone bills, etc, all mount up and VVAW doesn't have a Santa Claus sitting in the chimney waiting to fill our stockings with the green. We rely on contributions from our friends and supporters and we rely on our local chapters to pay for the materials we need to build our struggle.

Right now, we are embarking on a national fundraising drive to help pay off our debts and more importantly to help print a series of pamphlets dealing with such topics as the move towards world war, bad discharges and amnesty, and a history of the veteran's movement from Shays Rebellion to the present.

If every reader of this paper sent in at least a dollar we would be well on our way to realize our plans. For those who send in $5 or $10 we would send you a subscription to THE VETERAN. $15 or more would include a subscription and a copy of Winning Hearts And Minds --a collection of poems written by Vietnam veterans. We would also like to build up our sustainers list. $5 or more each month would give you a sub, WHAM, and any pamphlets that we print.

VVAW IS A TAX-EXEMPT ORGANIZATION. We would gladly accept donations from you that you could write off on next year's income tax.

WHY THE EMBASSY?
IRAN AND THE USA

From his "Peacock Throne," the Shah surveys his subjects--til they ran him out.

Flag-waving demonstrators shouting "War Now!" and a constant barrage of radio, TV and news articles are now enlightening the American people about what is going on in Iran and about the plight of our hostages held in the U.S. Embassy.

Not since the Gulf of Tonkin incident has there been such an outpouring of patriotism in the U.S. And like the Gulf of Tonkin (which was used to justify our involvement and aggression in Indochina), there is more to this situation than meets the eye--especially the eye that sees only through the U.S. media.

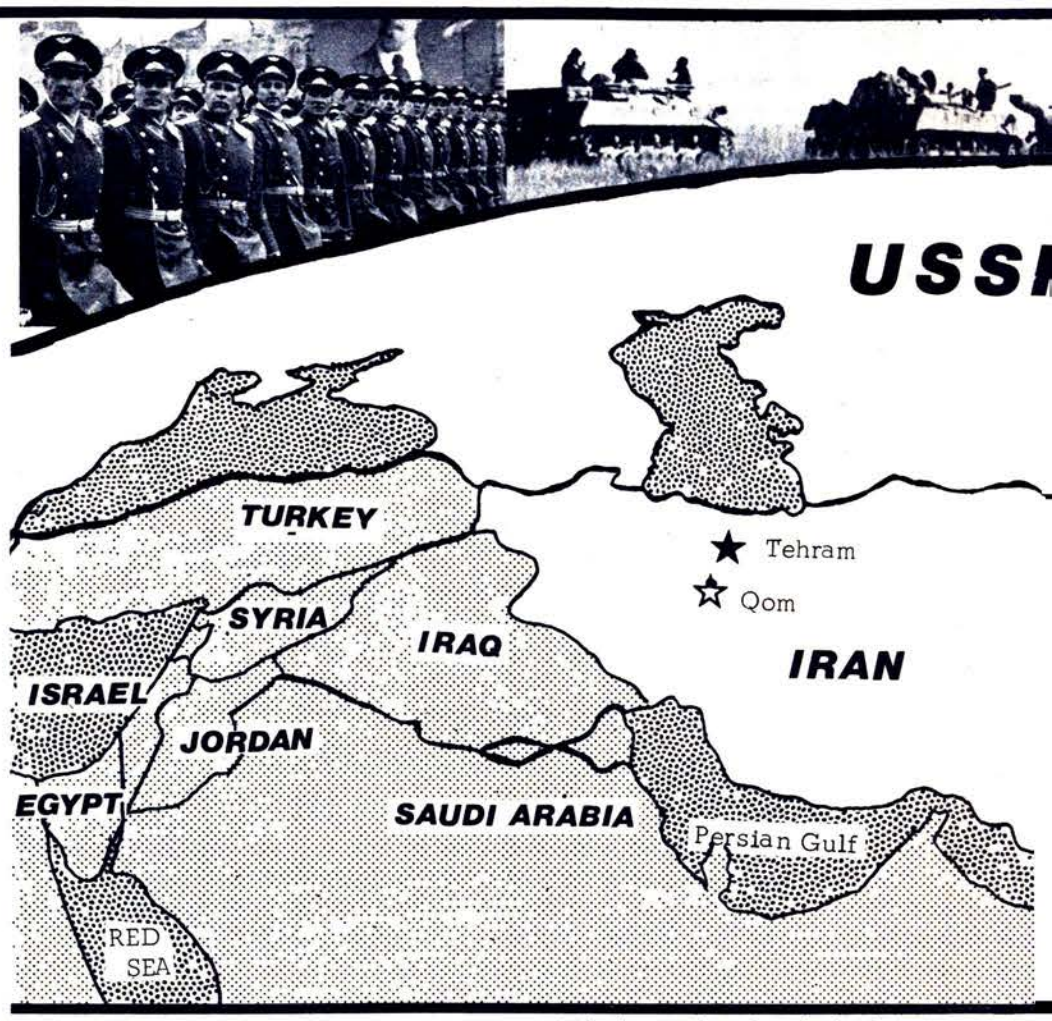
U.S. involvement in Iran did not suddenly begin with the present government. In the early 50's the Iranian people got tired of the Shah and kicked him out. (The Shah jetted off to Italy where he lived the life of a playboy prince.) Meanwhile, the people of Iran set up a democratic, secular government and abolished the monarchy. And was the U.S. happy with this secular, democratic government? Not a bit. Instead, the government sent in the CIA which set up a special team in the U.S. Embassy to overthrow the legal government. It used the Embassy as a base to bribe criminals, influence the military and set off a coup that toppled the Iranian government. The Embassy then sent word to the Shah to return from Italy.

At first, the Shah refused, afraid that the CIA coup was not secure enough to insure his throne. He only returned after personal assurances from the U.S. of massive aid and support. He vowed revenge and proceeded to institute a bloodbath against every democratic force--the Shah's infamous "White Revolution of Terror." Working out of the Embassy, the CIA helped to set up SAVAK, the Shah's secret police, which was funded, trained and guided by the U.S. In return for all these "favors," the Shah guaranteed the oil companies access to Iranian oilfields; U.S. military bases (by July, 78, there were over 45,000 U.S. military personnel stationed in Iran); and the Shah would act as U.S. front man in the Middle East.

For 25 years Iran saw an absolute monarch at the top, his rule carried out by members of his family and assorted lackies who ruled by terror; at the bottom were the millions of suffering Iranians with a 50% infant mortality rate, 80% lacking adequate housing; 100,000 political prisoners faced torture in the Shah's prisons.

The anger of the Iranians boiled over again and again. Still, the U.S. continued in its support of this corrupt dictator. Finally, the Iranians rebelled even against jets, tanks and U.S. supplied weapons, with demonstrations and strikes. People died, but again sent the Shah packing--he wandered around the world, living in splendor and luxury with the money stolen from the Iranian people. In Iran, the large numbers of the people followed Khomeini one of the most consistent and uncompromising voices against the Shah for the past 25 years (his son was among the thousands killed by the Shah).

And then the Shah turned up in New York City, ostensibly for medical treatment (something that he couldn't get in Mexico, apparently). While the U.S. Embassy in Teheran warned against it, still the Shah appears in the U.S. The man who was placed in power by the U.S. 25 years earlier, who was supported, funded, and fondled by the U.S, comes to the U.S. Iran boiled over, angry Iranians took the U.S. Embassy (base for the coup 25 years earlier), took the personnel captive and demanded that the murderous U.S. puppet monarch be sent back for trial.



Were the Iranians crazy? Was this an act of horrible provocation, or an act of angry fear concerning another coup attempt out of the U.S. Embassy?

The U.S., suddenly deeply concerned about international law, didn't give one damn for that same international law when it toppled the democratic government in Iran--or in Vietnam in 1963 or in Chile in 1973 --and in every case out of the U.S. Embassies.

Were the Iranians crazy to want their number 1 criminal back, or was it a natural responce to a ruler who used to buzzsaw off the legs of the "disobediant"?

The U.S. responce has been to cover up the history of U.S. involvement in Iran and center on the hostages as if no other factor was involved. The government has used the very real fears and thirst for justice among the people of Iran to build up patriotism here at home. It has used the lives of the hostages as a gimick to shore up smiling Jimmy's presidential prospects.

It comes as no surprise to

EDITORIAL
Look At Who Is Calling Who an Imperialist

Look who's calling who an "Imperialist?" We find it amusing reading a columnist like Willian Buckley, listening to politicians like Reagan and seeing U.S. government officials all condemning the USSR for their aggression in Afghanistan while, at the same time, comparing it to the U.S. invasion/aggression in Vietnam. Does this mean that the U.S. power brokers have finally decided to call the U.S. venture in Indochina an "imperialist war"? That's sure what it sounds like--and it sure is what the war in Vietnam was!

If these warmongers who never fought a war but just contributed to getting others killed in one are now admitting to their own imperialist designs of the past,

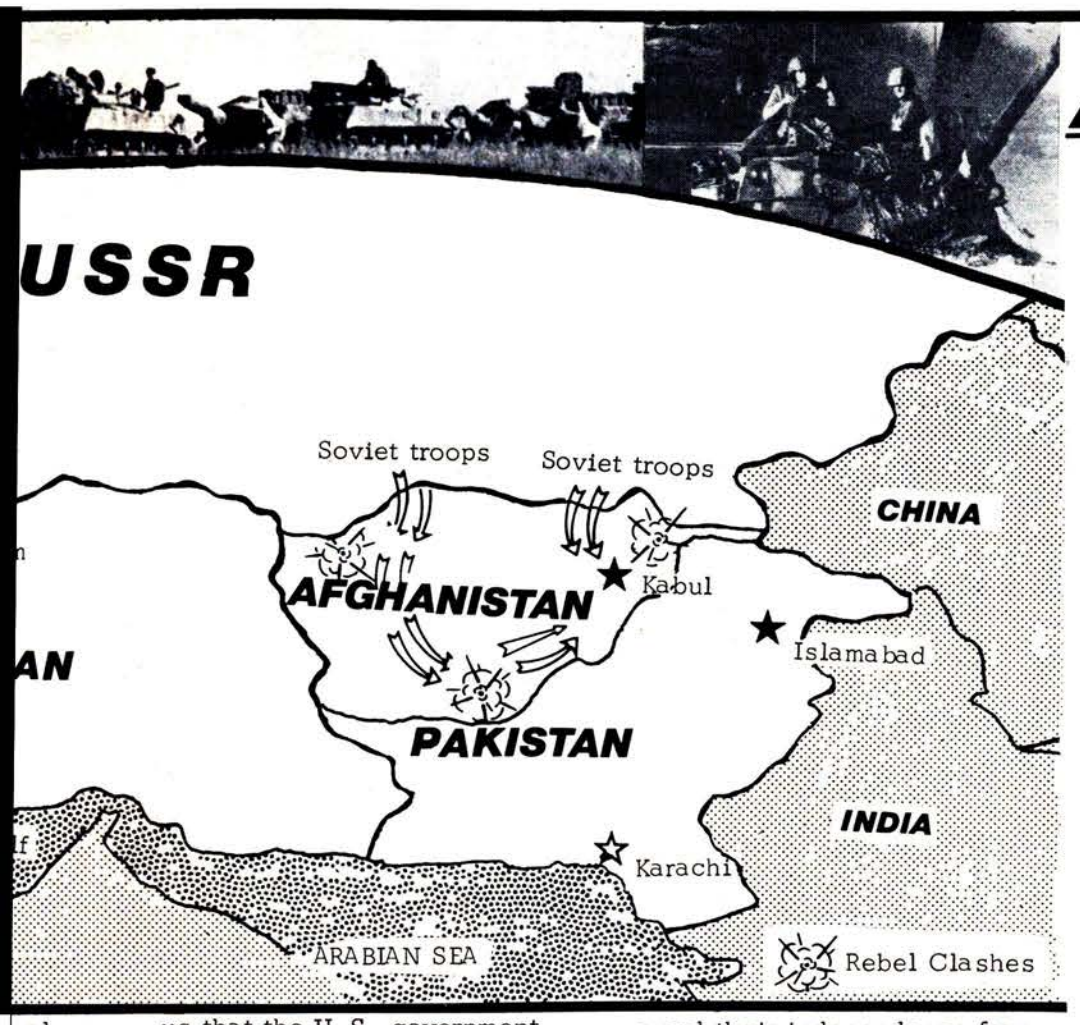
"That swine flu really has me worried!"

why don't they retire to some monastery to repent of their sins?

Actually, it's a matter that they recognize that most Americans know what "imperialism" and "aggression" mean from the

AFGHANISTAN

USSR INVASION MEETS RESISTANCE



The Soviet Union, in its most blatant act of aggression yet, has sent 100,000 of its troops into Afghanistan, The invasion was preceded by a coup using Soviet troops (apparently the Afghan puppet troops were not sufficiently reliable) to attack, arrest and execute the President. In fact, the deposed President was himself a Soviet puppet who had overthrown his predecessor in a round of coups similar to the U.S. engineered merry-go-round in Saigon in the '60's.

The Soviet Union came up with all sorts of excuses about protecting the "independence of Afghanistan," "rallying to the defense of an ally," fighting the reactionaries stirred up by "the U.S., China, and Pakistan"; as of the time this paper is being written, the new government of Afghanistan is still denying that any invasion took place, that the 100,000 Soviet troops are "invited guests."

What the USSR did not say was that increased guerilla attacks by Afghan nationalists and Moslems were slowly liberating the country from its Russian puppet government. The Soviets also did not mention that its troops are now in strategic position to hit Iran on two fronts, directly confront Pakistan, and put itself within striking distance of the Persian and Arabian Gulf and oilfields.

Far more dangerous than the Soviet's invasions of Czechloslovakia or Hungary (where there were already Soviet troops stationed), this latest move represents a move toward increased confrontation and world war.

The USSR has been getting over on the U.S. especially since the U.S. defeat in Indochina. The U.S. was discredited not only in the eyes of the world (which already had a bellyful of its pious talk about democracy, backed by troops and corrupt local puppets) but also by the American people who saw the war in Vietnam for what it was: a rich man's war for rich man's profits. The Russians got their foot in the door under the cover of "socialism" and aid without any strings attached. Many nations in Africa and Asia saw the USSR as an ally in opposing the moves of the U.S. It got over using Cuban troops in Africa. But far from its propaganda humanitarian or internationalist aims, the USSR was there for the same reasons as the U.S. corporations: markets and mineral wealth. Building up its economy on the backs of neo-colonies, social imperialism, Russian style, was challenging U.S. imperialism--and still is today!

Afghanistan is a real leap on the part of the Soviets, but a leap into a morass. The Afghans have fought before; they are certainly fighting now. Although VVAW fully supports the struggle of the Afghan people, we know that spears and flintlocks and raw courage will not alone turn the tide. They need help and need it now. We see it as imperative that the U.S. give immediate aid with no strings attached. It's not that we see the U.S. as having changed; it is no friend to the peoples of the world. But, at the same time, these Afghan patriots could use some M-72 Laws against Soviet tanks or a few Red-Eye missles against Russian MIGs.

It is not out of character for VVAW to call on our government to supply arms. During the Vietnam War, we supported the guerilla fighters and certainly did not condemn them for the source of their arms. In Afghanistan, we support the rebels who are fighting, like the Vietnamese, for their own liberation; we condemn aggression--either the U.S. or the USSR variety. We demand that the U.S. put its money--and weapons--where its mouth is, and supply the needed arms--with no strings attached!

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us that the U.S. government would not want to talk about history (did they in Vietnam?); it comes as no surprise that the lives of the hostages are used as political poker chips by our Government (remember the POW's)? And it certainly comes as no surprise that the U.S. would be perfectly willing to ship its young men off to die for oil companies' profits in the Mid East (minus Chip Carter, of course).

But we suspect that the government was a little surprised that the Iranians would take the challenge and chance to safeguard their independence from the U.S. It must have also come as a surprise that military enlistments, far from jumping as expected, have gone down--the calls for war were, it seems, for someone else to fight it.

As for VVAW, we want the hostages back. The best way to get them back is to have a tribunal around the Shah--let the government put pressure on Panama to get him sent back (we have certainly pressured governments before). Stop all the threats whose main purpose is know-nothing patriotism, and Four More Years!

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prior use of these words to describe Vietnam. And they are looking for the clearest way to picture the actions of the Soviet Union. Unfortunately, whether it is Soviet social imperialists being condemned by U.S. imperialists or vice versa, it's all the same to us--we're the ones who do the bleeding while they get the profits. And the payback is kind of amusing.

The Olympics and Politics

Carter has called upon the world to boycott the Olympics or at least move them out of Moscow. Make the USSR pay for its invasion of Afghanistan. What happened to the refrain the U.S. government was singing not many years ago when it was attacking the countries of Black Africa for "boycotting" the Olympics because of the racist policies of South Africa? Then, we were treated to pictures of African athletes practicing for the Olympics followed by the logic from the announcers about how "It would be better that they participate and beat South Africa just like Jesse Owens did in 1936--don't let politics get involved in sports!"

What happened to all that talk? What about the condemnation of U.S. Black athletes with their clenched fists in Mexico City, condemned because they "put politics into sports?" It looks a little like a question of who's trying to get re-elected.

On with the Olympics! To hell with both Carter and his counterpart Breshnyev.

THE VETERAN welcomes letters, comments and criticisms. Please write. Also, send along any poetry, drawings, photos or stories you would like to see in the paper.

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Vets'Day—Iran—Agent Orange—Draft

VETERANS ON THE MOVE

VVAW Veterans Day march in Milwaukee

VETERANS DAY IN MILWAUKEE--On November 11th, Vets Day, Milwaukee VVAW was allowed to march, for the first time, in the city-sponsored Veterans Day Parade. Since 1973 VVAW has been forced to remain out of the parade and march on the sidewalk, usually flanked by numbers of police. But the contributions to veterans' work, and VVAW's participation during Vietnam Veterans Week forced the parade committee grudgingly to accept VVAW as a recognized participant this year.

The parade consisted of the usual patriotic crap including tanks and Marine Corps Reserve troops; VVAW brought up the rear of the parade under the banner "Test and Treat Agent Orange."

Throughout the parade route the VVAW contingent drew warm applause from the crowd. Since the parade was officially endorsed by the Department of Defense, the veviewing stand was packed by military brass who were treated to the following marching cadence from VVAW:

"We don't support the draft
at all,
Rich Man, Rich Man;
We don't support the draft
at all,
Hey, Hey;
We don't support the draft
at all,
We'd rather see big business
fall,
Rich Man, your days are
through...."

The reviewing stand freaked out and even Major General Frisbee (yes, "Frisbee") saluted VVAW in the confusion. Then as the parade ended and the typical speeches were anticipated, VVAW poised to shout down any nonsense about going off to fight another rich man's war. General Frisbee walked to the microphone thanked everyone for coming and sat down. Milwaukee VVAW felt that their presence contributed to this sudden lack of things to say!

CHICAGO VETERANS DAY--On November 9th and 10th Chicago VVAW sponsored a large display portraying the history of veterans, with particular emphasis on Vietnam vets. During the two days the display was set up in the Daley Civic Center, several thousand people walked through the display, took literature and spoke to VVAW members about the display and the poor treatment of veterans of all eras. Many vets stopped by to express their outrage that the media didn't seem to give a damn about the problems of vets from the last war, while camera crews fell all over each other to cover some right wing preacher screaming about nuking and invading Iran, and a group of Nazi scum sponsored a march for race hatred outside the building.

On November 11th, in conjunction with Vets for Peace, VVAW sponsored our own Veterans Day activities--we've been barred from official ceremonies put on by American Legion honchos for 10 years now.

Following directly after the "official" program, VVAW's program was late in getting underway due to screams and curses directed at us by the State Legion Commander and his Legion Auxiliary harpy as they climbed into their limousine nearby. Wishing them a horrible fate, VVAW proceeded with the program speaking to the problems of V.A. healthcare, specifically the lack of treatment for Agent Orange defoliant poisoning; further, we talked about how we won't be suckers for another of their wars, subjects which the "official" program didn't touch.

Though the turn out for the program was low and the media coverage was almost non-existent, Vietnam-era vets made it clear that if we couldn't have an equal voice in their program, we'll continue to hold our own.

To show their contempt for us and Vietnam vets in general, Plaza officials locked the fence surrounding the Eternal Flame Memorial to Veterans after the Legion ceremony to prevent vets from "desecrating" the memorial. Well, let them drool over the dead and dream of new wars--we'll fight for the living and against their wars to come.

VETS DAY IN NEW YORK CITY--One hundred and fifty vets, their families and supporters marched under the banner of "Black Veterans for Social Justice," a New York organization of veterans.

Following a November 10th march on the V.A. hospital, a march which voiced demands ranging from adequate medical and educational services to upgrading of thousands of "bad paper" discharges given to GI's during the war.

On a day usually run by the local authorities, the vets hit at not only the general poor treatment of Vietnam-era vets, but minority vets in particular. Not only being used in disproportionate numbers in front-line combat units in Vietnam, Vietnam minority veterans face much higher unemployment and intensified social problems resulting from higher numbers of "bad" discharges given to minorities.

Speaking at the rally that followed the march, Joe Masereti, President of Black Veterans for Social Justice, gave one example of the treatment of vets. "Chrysler gets the government to guarantee their loans," said Masereti, "But you try to get a loan for a house if you're a vet. You're just a poor slob soldier and they charge you loan-sharking rates!"

IRANIAN DEMONSTRATION IN MINNEAPOLIS--"We are mad as hell to have to be here again protesting still another threat of a foreign military adventure --taking time away from our work as veterans to make a decent life for vets," said a VVAW sponkesman, former SSG Leonard Heubner, speaking from the steps of the Consolidated Recruiting Center of the old Minneapolis Federal Building on the 15th of December.

This speech began the rally which stated the commitment of VVAW to represent the hard education of Vietnam and combat the repetition of any such atrocity in the future.

Huebner's speech was followed by those of 16 other organizations making up the Iranian Defense Coalition, upholding the demand for no U.S. military intervention, an end to the harrassment and deportation of Iranians in the U.S., and demanding that the Shah be brought to justice.

Speakers from the foreign students' associations, energy activists from the Northern Sun Alliance, and a spokesman from THE WAY, representing the Black Community, among many others, explicated the long history of U.S. imperialism and exploitation in Iran and elsewhere, made possible by the Shah or Ky and Thieu who can turn to the U.S. for sanctuary when their own people make their homelands unsafe for them. Lady Liberty lifts up her lamp for wretched refuse indeed! Over 200 people attended the rally and, with the exception of one raving passerby, there was no disruption.

Members of Vietnam Veterans for Social Justice march in New York City on Veterans Day, November 11th, striking out at the many problems faced by minority veterans.

Nut Group Around PHONY "VVAW"

WARNING: a band of cult followers pretending to be VVAW may have dropped into your newspapers or onto your TV screen in the past several months. You may have heard about them in an abortive attempt to takeover the Washington Monument in early November; burning an American flag for the TV cameras at Washington University in St Louis; holding a National Guard commander "hostage" until they couldn't get him to do what they wanted at an obscure base in Michigan; or sending a supposed member of VVAW to Iran in December.

All of this, and perhaps other things we haven't yet heard about, was the work of the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP), a band of self-styled revolutionaries devoted to the hysterical teachings of their fuehrer, Bob Avakian, son of a San Francisco Superior Court judge. Since 1978 when the RCP decided that VVAW was not fanatic enough for them and their strange tastes, they have used the couple of RCP members who are veterans, supported by assorted flotsam and jetsam, to pimp off the respected name of VVAW to attempt to legitimize their own weird views of the world.

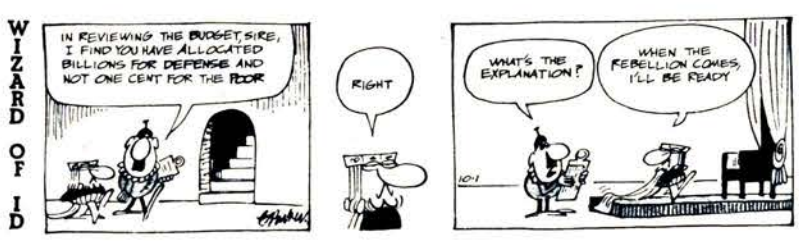
While VVAW ignored this misappropriation of our name for many months in hopes that these people would creep back under their rocks, in the last 8 months or so, their bizarre activities have attracted some attention from the media. Based on the harm that the RCP was doing to the name and reputation of VVAW, we filed court action against their scab organization along with the various other tentacles of the RCP which support this illegal activity (other defendants included RCP Publications, Advantage Printers and the Liberation Bookstore). While we asked the court for punitive damages, we were primarily looking for an injunction to prevent them from misleading people by using our name for their purposes.

To read the pages of "The Revolutionary Worker," tool of the RCP, it would appear that their VVAW would rely on faith and mass outrage to defend them in their misuse of the name of the organization. Nowhere is mentioned their 5 or 6 lawyers, some from the most prestigious law firms in Chicago. While they will present the front of being beyond the "law," when it comes right down to it, they scurry about to buy the best legal talent they can find.

And they need it. Most of the activities of the sham VVAW over the past several months have been supposedly aimed at support for the people of Iran--but with friends like this, no one needs enemies. Few people are converted to support of Iran by a burning American flag, though our experience has been that, sitting down and talking to individuals can often lead to their understanding why the people of Iran are doing what they are doing. Unfortunately, the RCP misfits, incapable of getting close enough to people to have a chance to sit down and talk with them, are reduced to haranguing passersby at street corners in hopes of shocking them into following the RCP line.

An appearance in court on the 17th of January in Chicago led to the judge's dismissal of all charges against all defendants except the fake VVAW. The RCP once again received grace and mercy from the courts which they pretend to abhor--similar to the RCP loonies who were not prosecuted for pointing guns at the Secret Service in Washington, DC back in November. But mercy from the courts has often been the result in trials of police agents and others whose activities were seen as valuable by the government.

The RCP's "VVAW" snivelled into court promising they would never again use the VVAW insignia, and further that they would use disclaimers whenever they used the name of the organization. Knowing their courtroom tactics so far, how much they will abide by these promises remains to be seen.



FRAGGIN'

Sp 5 Willy(Ret.)

Codename "MKULTRA." Codename "MKNAOMI." Clouds of bacteriological weapons floating in over New York, San Francisco, and Florida. Certain individuals being given mind-altering drugs. Sounds like a giant plot for a book or a movie. SPECTOR is trying to take over the world again. Call in 007. The Russians are coming. Call Henry "Super K" Kissinger.

But it's not a book or a movie. It's real! It happened! And it wasn't the Russians, nor the Cubans, or Mexico or the Ayatollah. No, it was the CIA, the Defense Department, the Army and the Navy.

Recent documents released under the Freedom of Information Act revealed that these things all happened.

In 1950 the Army wanted to study the possibility of attacking seaport cities with biological weapons. They wanted to see how the wind would blow the stuff around and what kind of defense would be used against it. So they got a Navy mine-laying vessel to cruise around San Francisco Bay releasing an aerosol contaminated with bacteria.

For six days, the 800,000 residents of San Francisco lived in a bacteria contaminated fog. One of the bacteria--called "serratra"--caused an outbreak of pneumonia and at least one death. This was one of 239 such experiments carried out by the Army.

The Defense Department was looking for a chemical weapon that could incapacitate someone without killed them. They needed some human guinea pigs and they found them in and around Edgewood Arsenal. Soldiers and civilians volunteered. Some were told that they would be testing drugs that were already on the market. Others were told that they were going to test new clothing, or go to chemical warfare school. What they got was a drug ten times more powerful than LSD--and loss of memory, inability to concentrate, flashbacks and hallucinations that lasted up to seven years after the experiment.

In 1955 the CIA tried an experiment of releasing biological agents over New York City and parts of Florida near Tampa. These projects were called by the names of MKULTRA and MK NAOMI.

In Florida they released whooping cough bacteria. In 1955 the number of cases of whooping cough was about four times what is normal. In 1956 the number of cases was about double. The normal number of deaths from whooping cough in Florida was one a year. In 1955 twelve people died. Most were children. All but one was Black.

Call in James Bond. Call in somebody! How can it be that they're killing people in order to protect and defend them? But, yes, it makes sense. For those of us who remember Vietnam, we remember how the U.S. was going to bomb them back to the Stone Age in order to save them.

* * * * *

Recently six crewmen from the Coast Guard Cutter Steadfast were caught with marijuana aboard ship. They were reduced in grade and given 45 days extra duty.

There's nothing unusual about this in today's modern military. Happens all the time. Except that in this case, their ship, the Steadfast, is the leading ship in the Coast Guard for capturing marijuana smugglers. So far they've captured and confiscated over 1 million pounds of grass.

I guess this goes to prove that old saying about how you don't bite the hand that feeds you.

* * * * * *

Then there are people who know not to bite the hand that feeds them. Take the brass at Clark Air Base for example. Near the end of the last fiscal year they had spent $715,000 less than their budget. If they didn't spend it before the year ended they would lose it--and worse, their budget might be cut for the next year.

So, of course, they went out and spent the money. Among other things they bought $20,000 worth of color TV's, and spent $32,000 re-surfacing the base

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RECOLLECTIONS

The episode above is one of a series of recollections from Vietnam and the military. VVAW hopes to print a book of such recollections--the "war stories" which often go a long ways toward showing what rich man's war was all about. We invite veterans to contribute their recollections

I SANG ALL THE WAY HOME!

OK! OK! Your lousy morale has made the general cry and I hope you're proud of yourselves."

It was the later part of my tour, when I was sent to Danang. The South China Sea provided the proper diversion my buddies and I needed. The sun, surf and relatively safe conditions were gravy for us. I was a Canine Sentry Dog Handler and was responsible for walking the POL points and ammo dumps in the area. Comparatively, the bush was sometimes more active though. In the camps there were always too many pigs looking for errors in your dress, hair and attitude. Article 15's kept us low in rank and pay, but we got through.

I was partying one day with some guys in a grunt unit, when the VVAW march on Washington came up in the conversation. The whole idea seemed so right, we all wanted in somehow. A hand-out that circulated asked vets to hang on; our brothers were demonstrating in Washington, and if we were unable to be there, we could send our medals to be thrown on the Justice steps, in protest of this lousy war.

The whole idea seemed perfect. When I got back to my hooch, I packed them up and sent them off to Washington, with a warm feeling in my gut. It gave me strength somehow, to know I was making my feelings known.

About two weeks later, I was ordered to my Captain's office. I was laying on the beach, soaking up rays, when someone said my name. I opened my eyes and the first thing I saw was an M-16 pointing me in the face. Behind it was a young pig, ordering me to his master. "An armed guard", I thought,"Maybe they've planted drugs in my area again." I didn't make the connection until the Captain opened his fat face, and and stated the charges and read me my rights. He informed me that I was under suspician of "unAmerican activities". He spat on and on about possible misconduct and punishment that he had at his disposal. I vividly recall the looks on their faces. They detested me--it was written all over their OD physiques. Inside, I gloated; this was the only way to get back. I was causing a great deal of discomfort in that office. I had won - I was short - they knew it - and it didn't matter what they did to me.

I was handcuffed and abused, busted down in rank again, and was forced to forfeit my freedom of movement to and from the company area. The Captain ordered me to sign a form never allowing me to fight in the armed forces again. I laughed in his face and told him how absurd he and his army were.

He smiled too, but at something different. He knew he had time to fuck with me, and he did. But, when the day came to return to the world, I stole every Army Regulation booklet that I could find in that pig's office, and dumped them into the beautiful South China Sea!! I sang all the way home!

THANKS FOR THE MEMORY

I grew up watching the Bob Hope Christmas Show. It was a part of Christmas watching girls strut and GI's shout, as much as a tree and a manger. The shows were never particularly good but you always got a good feeling knowing that "our boys" were getting a little cheer from this selfless entertainer at Christmas time.

I never really thought about the Hope show when I joined the Army. Or, for that matter, when I was sent to Vietnam--it was July, 1967, and Christmas looked a long way off.

But I lived through the boonies and sure enough Christmas came and so did Bob Hope and his troop. People were ready to hit the base camp for a stand down, and even if they weren't home, at least they could see a show and Bob Hope and some American girls. But we were all in for a surprise--it seems that there would be no stand down. Hope was too important a person to be left unguarded. The VC would sure like to get him (as if they wouldn't like to get any and all of us). So only one person could go to the show from our Infantry Battalion; the rest would be on roving patrol. And that one person would not be picked at random--it seems there was a request for someone with "connections"!

The companies went out, broke into platoons, and patrolled all night. But nothing was ever that easy in 'Nam. One guy from our unit set off a mine since travelling at night was a bitch. He was medevacked. We never found out if he lived, was crippled or died. But up in Da Nang we heard that Hope was booed off the stage when he said that President Johnson was proud of our "sacrifices for freedom."

So Christmas, 1967, ended, a burnt-out comedian making a name and some money with his Christmas Specials. The grunts were still slogging, the officers were cuddling up with the women, and one guy was possibly dead.

Well Bob, Thanks for the memory.

THE LAST GREAT WAR

The shadow spreads across the land
The blanket of an evil hand
That sows the desolating sand
Which blows and stings the empty eyes
Who spilled the last tears they could cry
Now seeing only endless sky
No reason now . . . to question why
For when and why and who . . . are gone
And only wind and sand lives on
To sing the symphony of dawn.
The wind, the sand, theoily sea
Which once the fish and fowl filled free
And even . . . man forbid! . . . a tree.

See the empty buildings there
The gaping concrete windows stare
Returning now, to sand and air.
And see the slimy river run
Where once a child played in the sun
To claim, at last, his father's gun.
We march toward the last great war
It's pounding on your bedroom door
And death may win . . . forevermore.
The death who claims us from inside
From where there is no place to hide
Too late . . . discovering they lied.

They lied to us when there was hope
When we still had the time to cope
They lied . . . from President to Pope.
They lied with Bible under hand
They lied upon the witness stand
They lied there . . . in the shifting sand.
Now I'm not one who criticized
There're better men lobotomized
For saying what they realized.

See the rising of the sun
On judgement day is justice done
The last great war has just begun.